

REMARKS

Claims 1-11, 17, 20, and 23-25 are canceled, claims 12-16, 18-19, and 21-22 are amended; as a result, claims 12-16, 18-19, and 21-22 are pending in the above-identified patent application.

§102 Rejection of the Claims

Claims 1, 6-7, 9-11, and 23-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Nunogami (U.S. 5,136,191). Claims 1, 6-7, 9-11, and 23-25 are canceled, so the rejections are moot.

§103 Rejection of the Claims

Claims 2-5, 8, 17, and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nunogami (U.S. 5,136,191) in view of Aoki (U.S. 5,610,544). Claims 2-5, 8, 17, and 20 are canceled, so the rejections are moot.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 12-16, 18-19, and 21-22 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 12-16, 18-19, and 21-22 have been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. As such, applicant respectfully submits that claims 12-16, 18-19, and 21-22 are in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance and notification to that effect is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to telephone applicants' attorney at 612-371-2109 to facilitate prosecution of the above-identified patent application.

If necessary, please charge any additional fees or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-0743.

Respectfully submitted,

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By their Representatives,

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CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 C.F.R. 1.8: The undersigned hereby certifies that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage for first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on this 22nd day of November, 2004.

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